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Northumbria Hosts National Event Exploring the Power of Experiential Learning

Northumbria University, Newcastle has welcomed higher education institutions from across the UK for a one-day event exploring how experiential learning can enhance life chances for students.

The event, held at Northumbria's City Campus in Newcastle upon Tyne, attracted over 200 delegates from universities including Leeds, Keele, York, Dundee, Manchester Metropolitan, Newcastle, Anglia Ruskin, Hertfordshire, and Sussex.

Delivered in partnership with the Institute of Experiential and Skills Based Learning (IESBL) and education consultants GTI, the event focused on the theme of ‘experiential learning in its disciplinary context.’ Through a series of workshops and discussions, attendees examined best practices and innovative approaches to ‘learning by doing’ across a range of disciplines, championing this critical method of teaching.

Experiential learning is a cornerstone of Northumbria’s strategy to power an inclusive economy – helping to place more graduates in highly skilled jobs in the North East than any other university. The university has built a strong reputation for working with industry partners to offer high-quality, real-world learning experiences that enhance career opportunities—especially for students from backgrounds without ready access to professional networks. By expanding its provision of experiential learning, Northumbria aims to equip all students with the skills necessary to thrive in a rapidly evolving job market.

The event featured a keynote speech by Professor Graham Wynn, Northumbria’s Pro Vice Chancellor for Education, who shared his insights into the transformative potential of experiential learning. Professor Wynn highlighted how practical, applied learning not only enhances student employability but also bridges the gap between academic knowledge and real-world application.

Key Highlights:

- Collaborative Workshops: Led by staff from Northumbria and partner universities, the workshops explored innovative approaches to experiential learning, addressing the unique needs of different subject areas.
- Student Input: Recognising the importance of the student perspective, Northumbria University invited students to share their own experiences and insights. Their contributions help educators refine and further improve experiential learning strategies moving forward.
- Sector-Wide Engagement: The event was designed to foster collaboration across UK universities, offering a platform for institutions to exchange ideas, share success stories, and develop new opportunities for students across the higher education landscape.

Professor Wynn commented: “At Northumbria, we believe in the power of experiential learning to transform students' futures. By giving students the chance to apply their learning in real-world contexts, we provide them with the skills and confidence to succeed. We are excited to bring together colleagues from across the UK to champion best practices and explore new ways to grow this important provision in higher education.”

Northumbria University is proud to support the Institute of Experiential and Skills Based Learning (IESBL) in advancing the use of experiential learning in higher education, helping to shape the future of teaching and learning in the UK.

UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR 2022 (Times Higher Education Awards)

Northumbria is a research-intensive university that unlocks potential for all, changing lives regionally, nationally and internationally.

Two thirds of Northumbria's undergraduate students come from the North East region and go into employment in the region when they graduate, demonstrating Northumbria's significant contribution to social mobility and levelling up in the North East of England.

Find out more about us at www.northumbria.ac.uk

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